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Work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 645 G (XXIII), the Secretary-General reports biennially to the Council on the work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. In the present report, the Secretary-General brings to the attention of the Council the work done by the Committee and its subsidiary body during the biennium 1997–1998, pursuant to Council resolution 1997/3.

The Committee finalized step two in the reformatting of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods* into model regulations. The Committee developed, in particular, detailed packing instructions for the transport of individual substances and articles on the list of dangerous goods most commonly carried and guidelines for the assignment of portable tank requirements. The Committee adopted various new provisions for inclusion in the model regulations and amendments to the existing provisions.

In order to give effective follow-up to chapter 19 of Agenda 21, on environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, the Committee continued to cooperate with other organizations concerned with the development of a globally harmonized system for the classification and labelling of chemicals — in particular, the International Labour Office and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development — and nearly finalized its work in the field of physical hazards.

* E/1999/100.

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On the basis of a proposal made by the Inter-organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) Coordinating Group for the Harmonization of Chemical Classification Systems, the Committee considered possible future arrangements for the effective implementation of the globally harmonized classification system and agreed that its reconfiguration into a Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, with two sub-committees, would be an appropriate solution.

With respect to future policy regarding the cycle of amendments to the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods*, the Committee considered that no firm decision could be taken on the model regulations during the period of alignment of the various international instruments dealing with the transport of dangerous goods and pending the implementation of the globally harmonized system for the classification and labelling of chemicals in accordance with Agenda 21 objectives.

The Committee adopted a programme of work for the biennium 1999–2000, with an item on the future evolution of the model regulations on the transport of dangerous goods, including the rationalized development of the regulations and the periodicity of amendments thereto.

The Committee is recommending a draft resolution on its work and a draft resolution on its reconfiguration for adoption by the Council.

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I. Draft resolutions for adoption by the Council

1. The Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I

Work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1995/6 of 19 July 1995 and 1997/3 of 18 July 1997,

Bearing in mind the increasing volume of dangerous goods in worldwide commerce and the rapid expansion of technology and innovation,

Bearing also in mind the continuing need to meet the growing concern for the protection of life, property and the environment through the safe transport of dangerous goods, while facilitating trade,

Aware that, in order to achieve internationally harmonized laws, the Economic Commission for Europe, the International Maritime Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and other specialized agencies and international organizations involved in activities related to the transport of dangerous goods and interested Member States have responded positively to the Council's various resolutions adopted since 15 April 1953, and that, being committed to taking the recommendations of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods as a basis for the formulation of their requirements and regulations, including those concerning labelling and classification, those organizations therefore rely on the work of the Committee,

A. Work of the Committee of Experts during the biennium 1997–1998

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods during the biennium 1997–1998,[1] in particular regarding:

(a) The adoption of new and amended provisions[2] for inclusion in the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods*;[3]

(b) The completion of the second step in the reformatting of the existing *Recommendations* into model regulations annexed to a basic recommendation,[2] in particular:

(i) The revision of provisions for the transport of dangerous goods in multimodal portable tanks;

(ii) The inclusion of detailed packing instructions for transport in packagings, including intermediate bulk containers and large packagings;

(iii) The inclusion, in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, of detailed provisions for the transport of radioactive material;

(c) The completion, pursuant to resolution 1995/6, of proposals for criteria for the classification of flammable, explosive and reactive materials, except for flammable aerosols,

[1] E/1999/43.

[2] See ST/SG/AC.10/25 and Add.1–4.

[3] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.VIII.1.

globally harmonized for various regulatory purposes,[4] in cooperation with the International Labour Organization in the context of the implementation of chapter 19 of Agenda 21;

2. *Commends* the Secretary-General for the publication of the tenth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods*,[3] in all the official languages of the United Nations, and for the publication of the second revised edition of the *Manual of Tests and Criteria* in Arabic and Chinese;[5]

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To circulate the new and amended recommendations to the Governments of member States, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international organizations concerned;

(b) To publish an eleventh revised version of the *Recommendations*, as amended,[6] and a third revised edition of the *Manual of Tests and Criteria*,[7] in all the official languages of the United Nations, in the most cost-effective manner, not later than the end of 1999;

(c) To envisage means of publishing the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods* on CD-ROM, if possible as a navigable version — that is, by commercial arrangement with external contractors;

4. *Invites* all Governments, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the other international organizations concerned to transmit to the Secretary-General their views on the Committee's work, together with any comments that they may wish to make on the amended recommendations;

5. *Invites* all interested Governments, regional commissions and specialized agencies and the international organizations concerned, when developing or updating appropriate codes and regulations, to take full account of the recommendations of the Committee, particularly those referred to in paragraph 1 (b) above, including the structure and format of such codes and regulations;

B. Programme of work for the biennium 1999–2000

6. *Approves* the programme of work[8] of the Committee and its Sub-Committee for the biennium 1999–2000, as follows:

(a) Development of provisions for the transport of gases in gas cylinders and multiple-element gas containers;

(b) Review of provisions concerning documentation on the transport of dangerous goods;

(c) Follow-up to chapter 19 of Agenda 21 (Harmonization of classification and labelling of chemicals),[9] including development of criteria for the classification of flammable aerosols, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization, and

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[4] See ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/28/Add.3.

[5] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.VIII.2.

[6] ST/SG/AC.10/1/Rev.11.

[7] ST/SG/AC.10/11/Rev.3.

[8] ST/SG/AC.10/25, paras. 141–145.

[9] See Report of the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992* (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1) (Vol. I and Vol. I (Corr.1), Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III (Corr.1)) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

implementation of already agreed criteria through the model regulations on the transport of dangerous goods;

(d) Miscellaneous amendments to the model regulations (listing and classification, explosives, lithium batteries, limited quantities, packaging issues, portable tank issues, consignment procedures, segregation) and to the *Manual of Tests and Criteria*;

(e) Development of new provisions for the transport of solid substances in bulk in tanks and freight containers;

(f) Evolution of the model regulations (rationalized development of the model regulations and periodicity of amendments).

C. Periodicity of amendments to the Recommendations

7. *Takes note* of the advice of the Committee that:

(a) No firm decision as regards a possible future four-year periodicity of amendments should be taken during the period of alignment of the format of the various legal instruments concerning modal aspects of the transport of dangerous goods on that of the model regulations, and pending decisions regarding the implementation of the globally harmonized system of classification and labelling of chemicals in accordance with Agenda 21 objectives;

(b) A new revised version of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods* should be published in 2001 after the 2000 session of the Committee;

8. *Notes* with satisfaction that this issue has been included in the work programme of the Committee for the next biennium, for discussion, together with the question of the evolution of the model regulations in the long term;

D. Report to the Council

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Council in 2001 on the implementation of the present resolution.

Draft resolution II

Reconfiguration of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods into a Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 1995/6 of 19 July 1995 on the role of the Committee of Experts in the development of a harmonized system of classification and labelling of chemicals for implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in chapter 19 of Agenda 21,[9]

Recalling also its resolution 1997/3 B of 18 July 1997 whereby global harmonization of systems of classification and labelling of chemicals was given priority in the work programme of the Committee for the 1997–1998 biennium,

Noting with satisfaction that the Committee, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization, has completed the elaboration of proposals for classification criteria concerning physical hazards,[4] except for the flammability of aerosols, on which work will continue into the next biennium,

Aware that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as focal point for health hazards and hazards to the environment, has also completed most of its tasks with respect to the classification criteria and has established a working group for criteria on mixtures, and that the International Labour Organization has established a working group for harmonization of chemical hazard communication systems,

Aware also that the Committee, the International Labour Organization and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, as focal points designated by the Coordinating Group for the Harmonization of Chemical Classification Systems of the Inter-Organization Programme for Sound Management of Chemicals, are expected to make available, through their cooperative efforts, by the year 2000, a globally harmonized hazard classification and compatible labelling system, including material safety data sheets and easily understandable symbols, in accordance with the objectives of paragraph 19.27 of chapter 19 of Agenda 21,[9]

Noting that the Coordinating Group has prepared proposals for the implementation of the globally harmonized system,[10] consisting in reconfiguring the present Committee of Experts and extending its mandate to cover not only transport of dangerous goods but also implementation and updating of the globally harmonized system,

Noting also that those proposals were endorsed by the Intersessional Group of the Inter-Governmental Forum of Chemical Safety, at its third meeting (Yokohama, Japan, 1–4 December 1998), which requested the Coordinating Group to develop draft terms of reference, in cooperation with the Committee,

Noting further that the Committee agreed to the proposals of the Coordinating Group, subject to certain conditions,[11] and that draft terms of reference have been developed, accordingly, by the Coordinating Group,

Recognizing that reconfiguring the Committee in accordance with those proposals would be the most cost-effective and efficient option[12] for the implementation of the globally harmonized system, ensuring at the same time cooperation between various authorities and organizations concerned with the sound management of chemicals, harmonization between various regulatory systems and facilitation of trade,

1. *Decides* to reconfigure, as from 2001, the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and its Sub-Committee into a Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, with one Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and a second Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, with terms of reference and arrangements as described in the annex below, and provided that the total meeting time does not exceed that currently allocated to the work of the Committee in a biennium,

2. *Invites* the reconfigured Committee and the Sub-Committee on the Globally Harmonized System to endeavour, whenever possible, to work on a consensus basis,

3. *Also invites* Member States interested in participating in the Sub-Committee on the Globally Harmonized System to apply for membership at the latest by the end of 2000 so that the composition of the Sub-Committee and of the reconfigured Committee may be decided at the organizational session of the Council in 2001,

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[10] ST/SG/AC.10/1998/51.

[11] E/1999/43, para. 21.

[12] See ST/SG/AC.10/1998/51, annex, for various options envisaged.

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide, not later than 1 January 2001, adequate resources to the Transport Division of the Economic Commission for Europe and plan sessions of the Sub-Committees and the reconfigured Committee for 2001 and 2002, as appropriate, in accordance with the arrangements outlined in the annex below.

Annex

1. Draft terms of reference

1.1 Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

The reconfigured Committee shall deal with strategic issues rather than technical issues. It is not envisaged that it will review, change or revisit technical recommendations of the Sub-Committees. Accordingly, its main functions shall be to:

(a) Approve the work programmes for the Sub-Committees in the light of available resources;

(b) Coordinate strategic and policy directions in areas of shared interests and overlap;

(c) Give formal endorsement to the recommendations of the Sub-Committees and provide the mechanism for channelling them to the Council;

(d) Facilitate and coordinate the smooth running of the Sub-Committees.

1.2 Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

The functions of the Sub-Committee shall be to:

(a) Act as custodian of the globally harmonized system of classification and labelling of chemicals, managing and giving direction to the harmonization process;

(b) Keep the system up to date, as necessary, considering the need to introduce changes to ensure its continued relevance and practical utility, and determining the need for and timing of the updating of technical criteria, working with existing bodies, as appropriate;

(c) Promote understanding and use of the system and encourage feedback;

(d) Make the system available for worldwide use and application;

(e) Make guidance available on the application of the system, and on the interpretation and use of technical criteria to support consistency of application;

(f) Prepare work programmes and submit recommendations to the Committee.

1.3 Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

The Sub-Committee replaces the existing Committee on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and its Sub-Committee with the same terms of reference.[13]

2. Working arrangements for 2001–2002

The total number of meeting days shall not exceed that currently allocated to the Committee of Experts and its Sub-Committee — i.e., 38, with a maximum of 3 days for the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods/Globally Harmonized System and 10 days for the Sub-Committee on the Globally Harmonized System (to be arranged

[13] E/1996/97, paras. 166–175.

by the secretariat after consultation with the Committee of Experts and the Coordinating Group of the Inter-Organization Programme for Sound Management of Chemicals.

II. Work of the Committee during the biennium 1997–1998

A. Meetings held

2. After the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 1997, the following meetings were held:

(a) *Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods*, thirteenth session, 7–17 July 1997 (ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/26 and Adds.1–3; fourteenth session, 8–18 December 1997 (ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/28 and Adds.1–3); fifteenth session, 29 June–10 July 1998 (ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/30 and Adds.1–3);

(b) *Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods*, twentieth session, 7–16 December 1998 (ST/SG/AC.10/25 and Adds.1–4).

3. The following 22 countries participated in the work of the Committee and of its Sub-Committee as full members: Argentina; Australia; Belgium; Brazil; Canada; China; France; Germany; India; Italy; Japan; Mexico; Morocco; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Russian Federation; South Africa;[14] Spain; Sweden; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and United States of America. The Governments of Austria, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Finland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, New Zealand, Nigeria, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Switzerland and Tunisia were represented by observers. The Commission of the European Community and 26 specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also participated.

4. Liaison was maintained with the international bodies or organizations responsible for individual modes of transport, in particular, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (for inland transport in the ECE region), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF).

5. The Committee paid special attention to the coordination of its own activities with those of other international organizations whose activities impinge on the field of transport of dangerous goods, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to ensure that their work would complement, rather than duplicate or clash with, existing agreements and instruments on the safe transport of dangerous goods.

B. Work of the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

6. During the biennium 1997–1998, the Sub-Committee discussed, as usual, various miscellaneous questions related to its terms of reference but gave priority, in accordance with Council resolution 1997/3, to:

[14] South Africa became a full member of the Committee pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 1997/212 C.

(a) Global harmonization of classification criteria (implementation of chapter 19 of Agenda 21[9]) (see sect. C below);

(b) A second step in the reformatting of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods* into model regulations;

(c) New and revised recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods.

7. The model regulations on the transport of dangerous goods, presented in the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods*, were supplemented with detailed packing instructions applicable to the use of packagings, intermediate bulk containers and large packagings for all individual dangerous substances and articles listed in the model regulations, except for gases.[15]

8. Following the complete revision of provisions concerning the design, construction, inspection, testing and approval of portable tanks, in the biennium 1995–1996, the Committee developed guidelines for assigning portable tank requirements to substances of classes 3–9.[16]

9. The Sub-Committee elaborated draft new provisions for multiple-element gas containers (MEGCs)[17] intended for the transport of non-refrigerated gases, but no final conclusion could be reached at the Committee's session and additional work is deemed necessary in the next biennium.

10. The Committee, in close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), included in the model regulations detailed provisions concerning the carriage of radioactive material,[18] on the basis of the IAEA *Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material, 1996 Edition*.[19]

11. In addition, the Committee adopted miscellaneous amendments to the model regulations concerning, *inter alia*, the list of most commonly carried dangerous goods and related provisions, desensitized explosives, lithium batteries, the assignment of tank instructions, and labelling provisions.[20]

C. Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

12. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 47/190 and 47/191 and Council resolution 1997/3, the Committee continued to give effective follow-up to Agenda 21, in particular to chapter 19, on environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals.

13. In accordance with the recommendations of chapter 19, the Committee cooperated with other organizations concerned with chemical safety, in particular those participating in the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization

[15] ST/SG/AC.10/25/Add.3 and Add.4.

[16] ST/SG/AC.10/25/Add.2.

[17] ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/28/Add.2.

[18] ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/30/Add.3, as amended by ST/SG/AC.10/25/Add.1.

[19] Safety Standards Series No. ST-1 (STI/PUB/998).

[20] ST/SG/AC.10/25/Add.1 and Add.3.

(UNIDO), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS).

14. The main area of cooperation remained the development of a globally harmonized system of classification and labelling of chemicals (GHS), bearing in mind that the objective of programme area B of chapter 19 of Agenda 21 was that such a system, including material safety data sheets and easily understandable symbols, should be available, if feasible, by the year 2000.[9]

15. Since 1992, the work has been carried out, under the supervision of an IOMC Coordinating Group, by three focal points: a working group jointly formed by the Committee and the ILO for physical hazards (flammability, reactivity, explosivity etc.);[21] OECD for health hazards (e.g., toxicity, corrosivity and environmental hazards); and ILO for hazard communication.

16. The Committee/ILO Working Group completed the task for most physical hazards (flammable liquids; flammable gases; flammable solids; explosives; desensitized explosives; organic peroxides; self-reactive substances; oxidizing substances; pyrophoric substances; substances reacting with water, giving off flammable gases), except for the flammability of aerosols which is an issue to be discussed and finalized in 1999. The conclusions reached so far were endorsed by the Committee as a proposal for the GHS.

17. Similarly, OECD finalized several proposals concerning health and environmental hazards, and ILO should finalize the work on hazard communication by the year 2000.

18. Since, as a result of that cooperative work, the GHS is likely to be available in 2000, the various bodies involved in the work considered that it would also be necessary to envisage mechanisms for effective implementation of the GHS and for keeping it up-to-date.

19. Several options were considered, including the creation of a new international body and the use of the various bodies or programmes of the United Nations system (such as the ILO, UNEP, Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods) or other organizations (OECD, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)).[22] The conclusion was that the most appropriate option to ensure effective and wide implementation of the GHS would be a body working under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, and the most cost-effective solution would be to reconfigure the existing Committee as a Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, with two sub-committees: the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, and the Sub-Committee on the GHS.

20. A proposal to that effect was prepared by the IOMC Coordinating Group and submitted, first, to the intersessional group of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) at its third meeting (Yokohama, Japan, 1–4 December 1999).[23] The proposal was agreed to, in principle, by the intersessional group, which requested the Coordinating Group to draft, in close cooperation with the Committee of Experts, terms of reference, so that the proposal could be submitted to the Council, and to address the issue of resources.

21. The proposal was then submitted to the Committee at its seventieth session. The Committee gave the proposal its strong support, and considered that:

[21] See Council resolution 1995/6.

[22] See ST/SG/AC.10/1998/51, annex.

[23] See ST/SG/AC.10/1998/51.

(a) The reconfiguration should not affect the present terms of reference or rules of procedure of the existing Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous goods;[24]

(b) The role of the reconfigured Committee should be strictly limited to that described in the proposal;[25]

(c) The rules of procedures of the Economic and Social Council should apply to the proceedings of the reconfigured Committee and the Sub-Committee of Experts on GHS, in accordance with rule 27 of those rules of procedure, except that they should endeavour to work on a consensus basis;

(d) The reconfigured Committee and the Sub-Committee of Experts on GHS should have as wide a participation and membership as practically possible;

(e) The total number of meeting days allocated to the reconfigured Committee and the two Sub-Committees (38) should remain the same as that currently allocated to the Committee and its Sub-Committee, and the existing schedule of meetings should remain globally unchanged — i.e., sessions of the various bodies should be held back-to-back every six months. The total number of meeting days allocated to the reconfigured Committee session should not exceed three days per biennium, while the number of meeting days that can be allocated to the new Sub-Committee of Experts on GHS would have to be agreed upon by the Committee of Experts at its twenty-first session — i.e., in December 2000 — and should normally be a total of 8–10 days for the four sessions (i.e., two to three days per session);

(f) The reconfigured Committee with its two Sub-Committees should start working in the biennium 2001–2002;

(g) The Secretariat should be invited to evaluate additional staff resources needed and budgetary implications.

22. The Committee agreed that the detailed terms of reference should be finalized by the IOMC Coordinating Group.

23. The Committee decided to prepare a draft resolution on the reconfiguration of the Committee, which it recommends to the Council for adoption at its 1999 substantive session (see para. 1 above, draft resolution II).

24. The Committee also agreed that the detailed terms of reference should be finalized by the IOMC Coordinating Group and annexed to the draft resolution, provided that they do not contradict the principles reflected in paragraphs 21 (a)–21 (g) above.

25. Subsequently, the draft terms of reference were developed by the IOMC Coordinating Group at its thirteenth session (Geneva, 28–29 January 1999), as reproduced in the annex to draft resolution II above. The IOMC Coordinating Group invited the Council to note that it wished to continue the work, in cooperation with the Committee of Experts, on additional practical details regarding the reconfigured Committee and its Sub-Committee on GHS.

[24] Ibid., para. 12.
[25] Ibid., para. 10.

D. Publication of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods* and future periodicity of amendments

26. As requested by the Council in resolution 1997/3, the Secretary-General prepared the tenth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods*[3] on the basis of the recommendations adopted by the Committee at its nineteenth session.[26] The edition was published for official circulation and sale in Arabic (280 copies), Chinese (100 copies), English (7,160 copies), French (990 copies), Russian (200 copies) and Spanish (530 copies). It is also available on electronic support (diskettes).

27. The secretariat also published the second revised edition of the *Manual of Tests and Criteria*,[5] in Arabic (260 copies) and Chinese (90 copies), as requested by the Council in resolution 1997/3, and the *Manual* is now available in the six official languages.

28. The Committee requested the secretariat to prepare the eleventh revised edition of the *Recommendations* on the basis of its work in the biennium 1997–1998 and the texts adopted at its twentieth session, including the model regulations, and the third revised edition of the *Manual*, and to publish them in the most effective manner, without delay, in all the official languages of the United Nations, not later than the end of 1999.

29. The Committee also agreed that the Secretary-General should envisage means of publishing the *Recommendations* on CD-ROM, if possible as a navigable version — e.g., by commercial arrangement with external contractors.

30. As requested in resolution 1997/3 C, the Committee reconsidered the question of periodicity of amendments to the *Recommendations* which was raised by the Secretary-General of IMO in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and brought to the attention of the Council at its substantive session in 1996,[27] where it was proposed that the publication cycle be expanded from every two years to every four years.

31. The Committee considered that no firm decision could yet be taken in that respect during the period of alignment of the various international instruments dealing with the transport of dangerous goods on the model regulations, and pending decisions regarding the implementation of the GHS, in accordance with Agenda 21 objectives.

32. It was suggested that IMO and ICAO, which had conflicting views on the question, should discuss their respective positions together.

33. The Committee agreed that the work of the next biennium (1999–2000) should lead to a new revised (12th) edition of the *Recommendations*, but that the question of future periodicity of amendments should be included in the programme of work of that biennium for consideration along with matters related to the evolution of the model regulations.

E. Future work

34. The Committee agreed that the work programme for the biennium 1999–2000 should include the following subjects:

(a) Development of provisions for the transport of gases in gas cylinders and multiple-element gas containers;

[26] ST/SG/AC.10/23 and Add.1–3.

[27] E/1996/15, Council decision 1996/301; E/1997/16, paras. 17–18.

(b) Review of provisions concerning documentation on the transport of dangerous goods;

(c) Follow-up to Agenda 21, chapter 19, programme area B;

(d) Miscellaneous amendments to the model regulations (listing and classification, explosives, lithium batteries, limited quantities, packaging issues, portable tank issues, consignment procedures, segregation) and to the *Manual of Tests and Criteria*;

(e) Development of new provisions for the transport of solid substances in bulk in tanks and freight containers;

(f) Evolution of the model regulations (rationalized development of the model regulations and periodicity of amendments).

F. Calendar of meetings for the biennium 1999–2000

35. The Committee proposed that its twenty-first session should be held from 4 to 13 December 2000. The Sub-Committee of Experts should meet three times: 5–16 July 1999, 6–17 December 1999, and 3–14 July 2000.